

TC Project Screening Checklist – Early Planning Stage
ARG/5/005 FRUIT FLY ERADICATION IN THE SOUTHERN REGION

1. What is the problem/need/opportunity?

This is both a problem and an opportunity. Argentina is one of the world's major growers and exporters of fruit. The problem is two fold. Damage from infestations of the Mediterranean fruit fly (med fly) is currently estimated at 15 – 20% of the annual crop. Moreover, at present, export of fruit to several major world markets, including the United States and Japan, are not possible because of fruit fly infestations. If the med fly could be eradicated, crop damage could be eliminated and fruit could be exported to major markets resulting in additional hundreds of millions of dollars in export sales each year.

2. What priority does the institution/Government assign to this problem/need/opportunity, and what information is this based on?

The Government has launched a major national effort to eradicate the fruit fly in the southern regions of the country. Current national expenditures in this effort are approximately \$9 million per year. An additional \$33 million dollars will be committed by the national and provincial Governments for this programme during the four years of the IAEA project.

3. What part of the problem/need/opportunity would the proposed project address?

The only proven method available for eradication (not control) of the fruit fly is the Sterile Insect Technique. The IAEA is the leading centre in the world for this technology and its application in area wide eradication projects. Through this project the IAEA will transfer critically needed technology including the Vienna 42 genetic sexing medfly strain and, based on experience in several other major eradication programmes, will assist in introducing a more effective field programme. This assistance is not available through any other international organization.

4. What would be the immediate result of the project itself?

Establishment of a technically advanced medfly rearing programme, and the basis of an effective and efficient field operation.

5. Assuming success, what would be the impact of the project on the overall problem/need/opportunity?

The project will play a key role in achieving the overall development objective of establishing a fly-free zone with appropriate certification by the U.S. Department of

Agriculture. This will open the possibility for exports to the United States and Japan in amounts estimated at several hundred million dollars.

6. What data or estimates support these impact projections?

These estimates are based on current known production rates and known imports of the countries involved.

7. Would the proposed project be supported by the institution/Government? If so, to what extent?

In fact, the Government has established a major national programme which is much larger than the proposed IAEA project. This is thus a very good illustration of one of the best uses of IAEA funds - i.e. to remove a constraint in a major programme of national importance.

8. Would the nuclear technologies available through the IAEA be the best means available to achieve the goal of the project?

The Sterile Insect Technique is the only technically proven means available to eradicate certain pests. The IAEA is the leading world expert in this technology and its application in area-wide eradication programmes.

9. Who would be the “end user” in the proposed project, i.e. the person or body who would ultimately apply the technology to bring about social or economic impact?

The end user of the technology to be transferred would be the national and/or provincial organizations responsible for managing the medfly rearing facilities and for operating the field distribution system for releasing the sterilized male fruit flies.

10. Is there – or is it expected that there might be – interest in this project in international development agencies or international institutes currently operating in the country? What agencies or institutes? What information indicates possible interest?

Funding for the national programme from major international funding agencies is actively being sought by Argentina. Such agencies have funded medfly eradication programmes in the past.